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'Don't leave your house': Duterte tells Filipinos who don't want to avail COVID-19 jab

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[Alexis Romero](#) (Philstar.com) - May 19, 2021 - 6:54pm

MANILA, Philippines — President Rodrigo Duterte has urged people who do not want to avail of COVID-19 vaccines to refrain from leaving their homes so they won't catch the virus and infect other persons.

Citing doctors' warnings, Duterte said people who caught COVID-19 can get reinfected if they have no protection against it.

"Well, in matters of your independence, we bow to that, we cannot force you. But then, I hope if you do not want to be vaccinated, do not leave your house so you won't infect other people because you will really get infected," Duterte said during a public address recorded last Monday and aired by government stations the following day.

Duterte said fears of getting vaccinated against COVID-19 have no basis.

"Nobody died because of vaccines. Thousands have been

vaccinated and nobody died of heart attack. If there are people who died (after getting the vaccine), they have existing illnesses," the president said.

"Now, if you do not want it, if you are brought to the hospital and if you die, you would go straight to the morgue. Nobody is allowed to enter the morgue if someone dies of COVID," he added.

Duterte said families of COVID-19 fatalities cannot say goodbye to their deceased loved one because the body has to be cremated immediately.

"You want that to happen? Okay, no problem...There will be no wakes, everything is prohibited. If that's what you want, that's okay with me. At least I told you, you chose that. Your choice, your life," the president said.

A Pulse Asia poll conducted from February 22 to March 3 indicated that 61% of Filipinos are not inclined to be inoculated against COVID-19 because they are not sure whether the jabs are safe. Officials have given assurances that all vaccines approved by drug regulators are safe and effective.

Duterte reiterated that he is ready to impose a stricter lockdown if the number of COVID-19 infections surges anew.

"There's a sharp drop of cases, it's because they followed the protocols. If not, I would be forced again to impose lockdowns and the government would be strict on everything... I do not want it. Under other circumstances, I would not want it. It would work hardships on the people. But these things are for your own good," the president said.

"If you do not follow (protocols), and there is another resurgence

because of new variants, I would be forced to impose a lockdown, maybe stricter this time because we do not know these variants. They have to be studied first then they will work on the vaccines. With how long, we do not know," he added.

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